

VMG COVID-19 UPDATE

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Issue # 31

Good afternoon to all.

Consider This

You're going to be hearing a lot about vaccine development in the coming months and that is a very good thing. It normally takes anywhere from 1.5 to 4 years to develop and produce, at scale, a safe and effective vaccine. There are reports from the UK today that an Oxford lab may actually be able to prove a vaccine is safe and effective by September. That would also be good but we'll have to wait for the trials to conclude and the results to be known. And then it will take time for production. In the meantime, we continue social distancing to keep our medical resources available and slow the spread of the virus and see if a safe and effective treatment emerges from clinical trials. And we, as a nation and world, need to devote lots of resources to testing.

So how could vaccine development have been different? Aside from the political "mistakes" of not paying enough attention to new viral threats, there are the wrong incentives "built in" to the funding of these efforts. In an article in the NY Times this weekend by Jennifer Kahn reports on efforts to create a panviral vaccine. This is a kind of default vaccine structure that could be relatively easily customized to fight almost any new virus. The biggest problem is that no one was willing to pay for it. Drug companies would have to spend millions on development of a vaccine that individuals would get once a year or not at all (in some years). Not much financial payback from that kind of use.

You might think that this would be a role for governments to take on rather than "the private sector." But new diseases emerge "in other countries" and some never reach certain shores. And it's all very expensive and which taxpayers want to pay for some previously believed remote possibility? Do you? I do?

In that article, Peter Daszak, a scientist presenting at a WHO conference is quoted as saying "we don't think twice about the cost of protecting from terrorism. We go out there, we listen to whispers, we send out the drones—we have a whole array of approaches. We need to start thinking about pandemics the same way."

OK. I'll stop there. But think about it please. Especially as you prepare to vote.

National and State Scene

I'm going to pass on the national scene today except to say that testing is key and rather than having 50 approaches, one national approach would be better.

At the state level, Governor Baker has just extended the Stay at Home advisory at least to May 18. This continues the order for the closure of all non-essential businesses and the ban on gatherings of 10 or more people. I think that's a good decision and I would not be surprised if, as that time approaches, it was extended into June. We all want to get out, go to the beach, the movies, restaurants, ball games, etc. but let's be safe.

At VMG

The Greenfield (and other towns) police and fire did a drive by salute to healthcare workers at VMG and elsewhere this morning. It was quite the scene (unless you are spooked by sirens) on Conway Street. Many of our staff were out there to return the salute. We'll try to post the video on the intranet page (the file was too big to include here). We thank them for their recognition and we should salute them as well as first responders.

Gina prepared this concise chart of operations updates at VMG this morning. I'm passing it on here:

Operations Update: Highlights

<i>Communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Letter to pediatric patients being prepared to be sent out▪ Thank you letters being sent out to those who donate PPE▪ Appropriate information shared on Facebook, VMG website▪ VMG Intranet Covid page continues to be populated with key resources
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<i>Clinical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised quarantine guidelines sent out 4/27/20 ▪ Work continues to prepare for processes to care for 0-2 years of age for wellness visits with vaccines; Work to follow on next age group to follow 3-6 years, 7-18 years for vaccines. ▪ Investigating needs to provide more care outside of the centers and needed equipment and protection to do so. ▪ Policies completed for emergency response outside the center, to be sent out today 4/28 ▪ Meetings to support specialist continue to provide support with care and schedules
<i>Reception</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great efforts across centers to provide phone coverage for all centers due to reduced staffing ▪ Medical Management outreach calls continue by reception staff
<i>Laboratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outside lab draws continue, GHC begins to utilize new area for this purpose behind the center.
<i>IT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research regarding capability of phone system to support center calls being answered at home

And Elsewhere

Here's a link to a NYC nurses journal published in the *New Yorker* to keep us aware.

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/04/a-city-nurse?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Magazine_Daily_050420&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&bxid=5be9e5663f92a40469faf69c&cndid=21488249&hasha=f1f07c005d3d7d2d87c7750cb90cd973&hashb=111400a8beefab12a9a2b4299df70b8f471f4012&hashc=bcc031ec8a3f5143606ac370d40121bf376c99b55fc0788b756d0f2c93f10b23&esrc=&utm_term=TNY_Daily

And finally....as you are staying at home...to lighten it up.....

Excerpts from an "Isolation Diary"

Day 1 – "I can do this. Got enough food and wine to last a month."

Day 3 – "Strawberries. Some have 210 seeds. Some have 255 seeds. Who knew?"

Day 4 – "8:00 pm. Removed my day pajamas and put on my night pajamas."

Day 6 – "Today I get to take the garbage out. I'm so excited. I can't decide what to wear."

Day 8 – "Went to a new restaurant called "The Kitchen." You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have NO clue how this place stays in business."

Day 10 – "Struck up a conversation with a spider. Seems nice. He's a Web Designer."

Day 12 – "I realize why dogs get so excited about something moving outside, going for walks, taking car rides. I think I just barked at a squirrel."

Day 13 – "If you keep a glass of wine in each hand, you can't accidentally touch your face."

Day 14 – "Watched the birds fight over a worm. The Cardinals lead the Blue Jays, 3 to 1."

Day 15 – "Anybody else feel like they've cooked dinner about 395 times this month?"

Thanks once more for all you do.

And remember: wash your hands (a lot), don't touch your face, maintain social distancing (it works), wear a mask, stay home if you're sick.

Be well,

Joel

Be patient; be mindful